

Class Struggle

The Workers' Republic Women's Liberation International Socialism

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USSR ON THE BRINK

The Soviet Union is fast approaching a revolutionary crisis. It is in the grip of an economic crisis so deep that in arguing for panic price increases, the Soviet Prime Minister, Ryzakov, told Parliament, "We have no more money. We have no more gold to buy grain".

The ruling bureaucracy is so torn by internal strife that it cannot present a coherent strategy to deal with the economic chaos. The working class, exasperated at the economic hardship and lack of political direction, are expressing their frustration in strikes and demonstrations. In May they founded the first mass independent workers' organisation (see page 4).

If the proposed dramatic price rises are pushed through there will be massive resistance, especially from working class women already struggling with food shortages and endless queuing. In short, the rulers cannot go on ruling in the old way, the workers will not go on suffering in the old way. Yet the economy demands decisive and immediate action.

The bureaucrats are deeply divided about the solution to their troubles. On one side there are the bureaucratic conservatives determined to maintain the USSR's inefficient planning mechanism. On the other side there are the pro-capitalist "radicals" of the Democratic Forum, led by Boris Yeltsin. They want rapid structural reforms of the Soviet economy to pave the way for the introduction of the profit system.

Between them, Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership are determined to shake up the bureaucracy which is equally determined to maintain its grip on economic and political power.

The failure of Gorbachev's *Perestroika*, re-invigorating bureaucratic planning through market reform and the stream lining the bureaucracy, comes as no surprise to real, revolutionary, communists.

The key to efficient planning and economic progress in a country where the profit motive has been eradicated is the democratic rule by organs of the mass of producers and consumer and decision making at every level of the economy. But to the privileged bureaucracy this democracy of producers and consumers is like a cross to a vampire.

The imperialists are backing Gorbachev's economic measures. Having won the 'cold war' and helped reduced the Soviet economy to chaos, they are still relying on the Soviet leaders to deliver the USSR on a plate to the profiteers.

Now they fear that mass working class resistance to Gorbachev's economic plan, combined with national breakups in the Soviet Union, will plunge the whole world into turmoil.

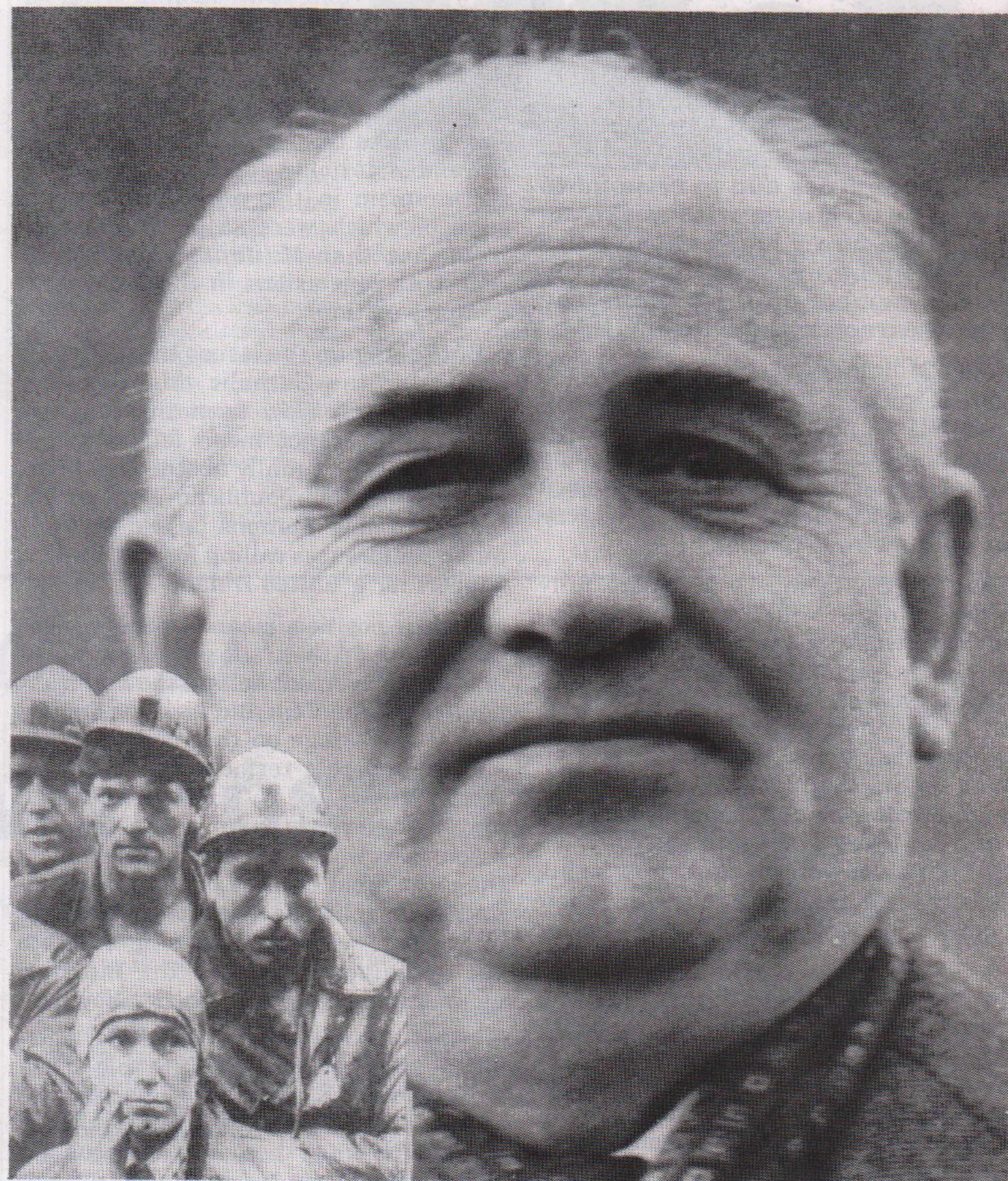
The imperialists are terrified at the prospect of the world order erected by themselves and Stalinism over the dead bodies of millions of workers after World War II, crumbling. Yet they are not sure that they are strong or united enough to replace it with a stable new order of their own.

It falls to the workers to perform that service for humanity. The Soviet working class, if it can find revolutionary leadership, build fighting militias and democratic workers councils, like those which overthrew Tsarism, can rid the USSR of the bureaucracy and open the road to genuine socialism.

But the Soviet workers lack a coherent strategy and leadership to resolve the crisis in their interests. If a revolutionary strategy is not found by the Soviet workers then the outcome of the present economic crisis will be either the restoration of capitalism, with the potential for a major strengthening of imperialism on a world scale, or a drastic retrenchment by the conservative bureaucrats through repression.

"Bread is socialism. You can't raise the prices", one Soviet MP told Ryzhkov. No doubt his words reminded the Soviet Parliament that Lenin, whose statue towers over their proceedings, led the Russian peasants and workers to power in a struggle for 'Bread, Peace and Land.'

But socialism is not just bread. It is real freedom from poverty, unemployment, ig-



norance and tyranny. The collapse of fake socialism in the USSR gives the workers another historic chance to seize it with both hands.■

Solidarity with Workers in Eastern Bloc

THE DEVELOPING opposition of the new workers' movements against the austerity measures of the 'reforming' governments in the Eastern Bloc, poses more and more urgently the need for open democratic solidarity to be built in Ireland to support the new independent movements of working class struggle.

A key function of such solidarity activity is political, i.e. to open up real debate with the the new movements in which activists of different political views in the western

labour movements can exchange views on the key questions of what direction the new movements should take.

Visiting Moscow in May a member of the IWG invited Soviet miner activists to come to Dublin in Sept-Oct. to speak at open democratic public meetings of activists from the Irish working class movement and to hear all shades of viewpoint in the Irish workers' movement. The task now is to build sponsorship for this and other such visits on an open and democratic basis.

INSIDE:

- Soviet Workers Mobilise
- The Planned Economy

In Moscow IWG interviewed activists and officials in the new left and labour movement organisations. The most important new development in the Soviet working class is the Confederation of Labour founded at Novokuznetsk which is reported in the centre pages of this issue.

Within this new confederation major sections of workers, e.g. miners, may soon form distinct trade unions. For the moment, however, the imminent prospect of major strike action in the mining areas, which will find a focus at a conference in Donetsk on 11 June, is regenerating the regional and local strike committees first set up last summer. Many elements of last summer's committees are seen now by the rank and file as already bureaucratised and the pressure is mounting to elect new democratically mandated rank and file leaders.

The scale of the new movements in the USSR may be small yet, but the developing conflicts there and in Eastern Europe will rapidly create the possibility of mass movements mobilising entire working classes.

The battle for the political soul of those movements is already being engaged by the right wing of the pro-imperialist international "Social Democratic" organisations.

It is the duty of all socialists to fight now for solidarity action which can intervene in dialogue with them to present them with the experience of genuine militant struggle against capitalist exploitation. Socialists and militants must urgently build a genuine Campaign of Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc, with democratic control by all socialist and labour movement bodies willing to affiliate and support these aims!■

EDITORIAL

Trade Unions Against Repression

A NUMBER of motions on the agenda of the annual NIPSA May conference in the North predictably raised the issue of sectarianism in the workplace and the need for a trade union campaign to fight it. Largely the inspiration of the *Militant* group these proposals—to build anti-sectarian committees in the workplace and communities and to respond to acts of sectarianism with strike action—have never had a cat-in-hell's chance of being accepted by the NIPSA membership, let alone the cynical careerists who lead NIPSA.

True, *Militant* can point to countless examples, such as in the last few weeks, when NIPSA members walked out after death threats from someone describing himself as the IPLO. And, of course, such actions must be supported by every serious militant and socialist.

But NIPSA members are more fully aware than the *Militant* that sectarianism in the workplace, whether the display of Orange regalia or threats to social security workers by the UDA/INLA/IPLO etc, is the effect rather than the cause. Sectarianism reflects the political divisions within the Northern state whose creation embodies and copperfastened the sectarian Orange monolith within which the Protestant working class drew small, but significant benefits, relative to their fellow Catholic workers.

As report after report into sectarian employment practices continued to show—the last one about the University of Ulster and the electricity industry—the mechanisms of Lodge patronage remain a potent element in ensuring Protestant working class advantage in job access.

To raise the issue of sectarianism seriously and in a concrete manner within the trade union movement means spotlighting not only these burning questions—which *Militant* refuse to do—but even more going to the heart of the matter. The creation and purpose of the Northern state itself meant that job discrimination and sectarianism against Catholics was the inevitable means of aligning Protestants with their Orange masters.

This was the instrument through which British imperialism, aligned with Orange capital, denied the Irish people the right to self determination, imprisoned the Catholic minority within the Orange sectarian statelet and simultaneously laid prostrate the Irish working class within two sectarian and clerically-dominated states. British and Irish capitalism, whatever their political differences down the years, have benefited enormously at the expense of all workers.

Militant's fantasy that the political outlook of Protestant and Catholic workers—Loyalism and Nationalism respectively—somehow evaporates on the shop floor is the most cretinous economism that plays directly into the hands of the trade union bureaucrats. For it means that they consciously refuse to recognise that the crucial questions that affect in particular the anti-unionist minority, like

repression, the role of the UDR and RUC, special courts, shoot-to-kill etc., constitute the real starting point for a trade union and working class campaign against imperialism.

And that lets the bureaucrats completely off the hook, while permitting them occasionally, like the NIPSA leadership last November, to hold a special conference on sectarianism in the workplace, the results of which were so platitudinously irrelevant that *Militant* couldn't even report its conclusions in the December-January edition.

But taking up the issues that affect in particular the Catholic minority, and which directly flow from the national question, does not mean following the example of the equally abstract and barren exercise of republican-inspired attempts to have motions passed at trade union conferences calling for trade union support for a 'united Ireland'.

Such a position means nothing more than lining up the trade union and working class movement behind the bankrupt politics of Sinn Féin and its illusions in a 'democratic' stage on the road to socialism. In concrete terms such a position simply allows the ICTU bureaucrats to play upon the fact that, if successful, such resolutions would strengthen the hand of the most rabid Ulster Loyalists determination to split the Irish working class movement, without advancing one iota the actual conditions of the minority against their oppressors in the North.

Issues like repression, repressive legislation, special courts etc., the role of the RUC and UDR and the whole obscene panoply of anti-democratic regimes North and South must become the focus for building a genuine working class answer in each and every union throughout the island. But not to achieve a united capitalist Ireland. It must be an integral part of the struggle for working class power and the overthrow of capitalism.

To make this fight more effective, the building of such a campaign has to be linked to the savage social and economic attacks on the living standards of all workers North and South by the Thatcher and Haughey governments, as they seek to make us bale out once more their own crisis-prone systems.

The lessons of the small but significant *Trade Union Campaign Against Repression* in the late 70s have to be built upon. It pointed the way for an independent working class solution to the national question before it was subordinated to the Relative Action Committees (RACs) by republicans and centrists alike.

The tasks begun and sidetracked then remain to be taken up today—to mobilise the nucleus of a working class struggle against repression within the trade union movement; to fight for concrete action against state repression; wage a battle for the hearts of the Irish working class confused, alienated and left passive in the face of twenty years of poisonous pro-imperialist propaganda. ■

New Attacks on Women's Rights

THE RIGHT of women to control their fertility has come under a new legal attack in the guilty verdict handed down against the Irish Family Planning Association for selling a condom in the Virgin youth music store in Dublin. Under the 1985 Health & Family Planning Act non-medical contraceptives can only be sold to over 18s in licensed outlets, usually chemists and doctors.

Despite the Aids epidemic, the right-wing fundamentalists have moved to have this law rigidly enforced as part of their general offensive against contraception and abortion. It is an act of sheer criminality against the welfare of youth and women in pursuit of a moral dictatorship.

The legal basis which made this possible was enacted by the Labour Party, in coalition with Fine Gael. At the time they boasted that it was a great step forward from Haughey's previous 'Irish solution' which restricted contraception solely to married couples!

The IFPA's response is to produce a Charter of Sexual Family Planning Rights for endorsement by unions, women's groups etc. Whatever the educational merits of such a Charter, it remains a pious sentiment in the face of a powerful and determined enemy.

At the same time mobilisations around the right to Abortion Information have declined as the young careerists at the head of the Union of Students in Ireland counted

START OFF WITH EIGHT OR NINE
AND HAVE THE REST LATER...



their publicity gains and shut down any further action. Sadly the subsequent attempt to gather some of the forces for a continued campaign proved to be politically limp and less than democratically organised.

On foot of a public meeting on Women's Day a campaign committee was formed which was extremely selective in whom it invited along, despite assuring all in attendance that they would be invited to further meetings. The SWM was a key agent in this sectarian manoeuvre. When they then advertised a "conference" on 5 May in Dublin the platform speakers took three-quarters of the time, some discussion and no resolutions. It was appropriate, after such an utterly apolitical and undemocratic approach to building a campaign, that the organisers should think their time better spent giving out leaflets on the street—to

which the meeting adjourned.

The scale and importance of the issues raised by the anti-woman offensive demand a serious political approach. Isolated acts of 'defiance' are no substitute for a campaign which fights to rally forces around a political platform to force the Irish state to repeal the legal basis for banning abortion information. In the context of such a campaign around clear political demands, defiance of the law and defence of anyone victimised, will be vital elements in the struggle. Such a campaign should immediately fight to mobilise in defiance of any payment of Court damages to SPUC at the expense of the student leaders.

Such a fight cannot ignore to also take up at the same time the key demands on contraception and sex education which can both broaden its support and more effectively combat the enemy. ■

Republican Spectacle

THE EULOGIES showered on the late Cardinal O'Fiach by the Irish and British bourgeoisie were entirely appropriate.

After all he was one of them, the most powerful representative of the Irish Catholic Church and a vital force in maintaining that institution's historical role as the key pillar of the capitalist establishment in Ireland.

O'Fiach was, undoubtedly, the unrivalled example of the sanctimonious hypocrisy so typical of the Irish Catholic church. None of his fellow prelates came within a mile of mastering his knack of "hail fellow-well-met" unctuous "concern" for the poor, the unemployed, the anti-unionists etc, while simultaneously representing the most hardline wing of bigoted Catholic fundamentalism.

Little wonder then that the bourgeoisie lauded praise on him, this arch defender of reactionary Catholic values in education, the oppression of women, the rights of property, the duties of the worker and the "sin" of armed struggle

But the spectacle of the leaders of the so called secularist republican movement—McGuinness and Adams—at his funeral and their stomach-turning "praise" for his "strong nationalist philosophy" must have had Wolfe Tone turning in his grave.

As in the H-block struggle when O'Fiach and his priests—with Sinn Féin's blessing—played a key role in undermining the whole tragic struggle, Sinn Féin's nationalism once more blinds it to the deadliest enemies of the exploited and oppressed on this island.

The constitutional nationalist O'Fiach, acutely alert to the need to protect his church from the alienation of the anti-unionist working class in the north, brazenly and cynically played upon all their nationalist illusions in order to confuse and weaken the struggle from within.

"Without O'Fiach they would have been in a far far worse position" (McGuinness, *Sunday Tribune*, 20.5.90). Indeed. He might well have added that with-

out the republican movement and illusions in O'Fiach such as those of McGuinness and Adams the Catholic Church would have been in an even worse position.

But for that to happen the republican movement would have to recognise in word and deed that national oppression has its roots in capitalism. Only a strategy which places the mobilisation of the anti-unionist working class north and south at its very centre can create the forces for victory that can draw sections of Protestant workers into the battle for a secular Irish workers' state.

Within the last ten years the republican movement has loudly proclaimed its socialism, its recognition and concern for women's oppression, its interest in appealing to Protestants etc. Nothing could have undermined more graphically these claims than the statements and actions of the republican movement's leadership over Cardinal O'Fiach. ■

STOP THE IRB!

A BILL aimed at restricting the power of the Irish trade union movement is due to be enacted over the Summer months. It already has the backing of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) whose leader, Peter Cassells, expressed himself as "broadly happy" with this attack on the ability of organised worker to struggle effectively against the bosses. The Bill has got to be stopped.

"A low key approach" is how the media characterised ICTU's response to the Industrial Relations Bill which one trade union leader has described as "the worse dilution of workers rights in the history of the state". As far back as April 1988 *Class Struggle* (No. 6) reported on:

secret negotiations behind the backs of the membership ... between ICTU officials and the Fianna Fail government ... to seriously limit the ability of workers to take industrial action.

The key areas of attack which we warned against then—secret ballots, secondary picketing, injunctions and the removal of immunity—figure prominently in the proposed legislation.

Secret ballots would be mandatory before any industrial action could be taken. Trade unions are sanctioned to amend their rule books accordingly, with or without the consent of the membership. Those failing to comply will have their licences revoked.

In the Dáil Labour's Deputy O'Sullivan sprang to the defence of the union leadership, too spineless to stand on their own feet. He pointed to the difficulties of a speedy response by officials under circumstances of an all encompassing secret ballot requirement. "A limited form of industrial action should be possible", he suggested "provided a secret ballot is conducted within seven days of the commencement of action". Fighting talk indeed!

Genuine Democracy

Not for him the genuine democracy of voting by an open show of hands. For, as was outlined in *Class Struggle* No. 6, what is at stake here is:

precisely to isolate individual workers from collective decision, to isolate them from the arguments and debates within the rank and file meeting collectively. It aims increasingly to force them to make their decisions according to what they read and hear in the capitalist controlled media.

To cap it all the Bill would also give controlling bodies in the unions "full discretion in sanctioning or supporting a strike ... notwithstanding that the majority of those voting in the ballot ... favour such strike". Heads I win, tails you lose! And should a strike ballot be carried against all the odds and should it further be

supported by the leadership, management must still be given one week's notice of any such action — all the better for them to lay their plans to break the strike.

Other provisions in the Bill severely restrict secondary picketing. It would be permissible only where workers in dispute have a "reasonable" belief that the second employer is "directly assisting" the employer who is party to the dispute for the "purpose of frustrating the strike or any other industrial action." In other words, the onus will be on the workers to show that the employer set out to deliberately undermine the strike and that he had the assistance of another employer.

But even presuming that workers surmount these legal obstacles, only those directly involved in the dispute could, henceforth, legally picket. This outlaws the practice of solidarity picketing — a weapon vital to the class struggle — whereby picket lines can be augmented by union members from other workplaces. The implied, threat to the ICTU second-tier All Out Picket is very real. Workers of other unions refusing to pass a workplace picket in situations where they themselves had not been balloted as well would be breaking the law.

The trade union bureaucrats are trying to sell the Bill as a lesser evil as against the employers' aim of smashing secondary picketing altogether. The much talked about restrictions on employers' access to injunctions turns out to be a mere smokescreen. Far from abolishing the system of *ex parte* injunctions, where the bosses' case is put in the absence of any worker representatives, the new proposals require only that the employer inform the union of his intention to seek an injunction.

Immunity from damages arising out of trades disputes is a long established right ever since the 1906 Trade Dispute Act. Under the terms of the IRB it too, comes under attack. Unofficial strikes (or strikes where action is taken without going through the procedures) and inter-union disputes will be actionable. This means that workers could be liable to pay damages to their employers or even face a period in prison. Nor is there any guarantee that unions will be immune from actions taken by third parties affected by disputes.

Added to all this are provisions that deal with the government's labour relations machinery, all meant to maximise state interference in trade union affairs. As against this prepared onslaught on the rights of workers, not one single march or not one day of action has been called by the union leadership. Not even a genuflection in the direction of a special conference to discuss the issues.

True, there has been a flurry of activity around amendments recently as the Bill goes through its committee stage in the Dáil. What lies behind

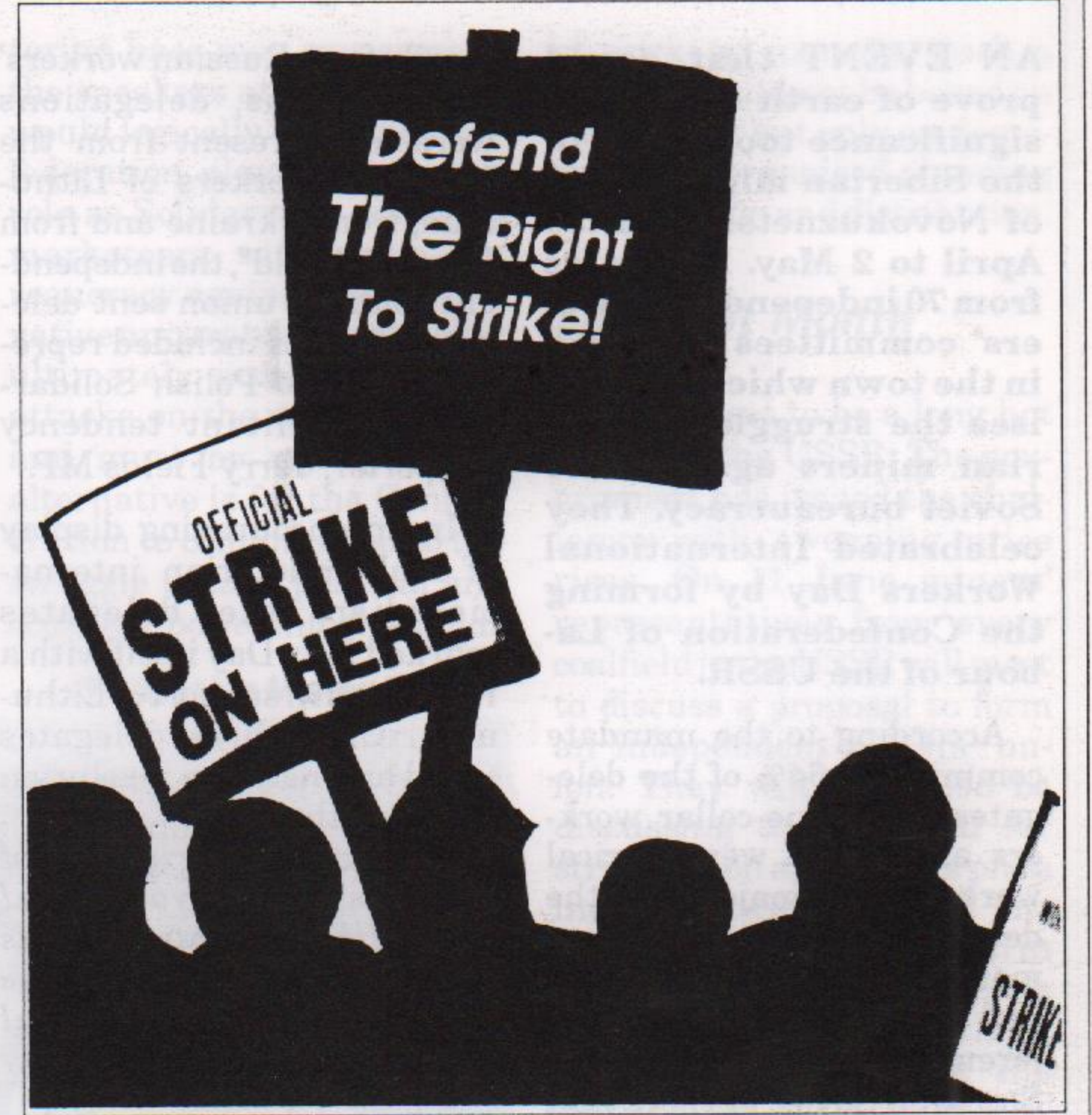
this burst of activity, however, is the concern of the ICTU leadership to seek "practical" changes "to ensure the effective working of the proposed legislation". Their fear is that any workers' resistance to these draconian measures will damage the present cosy relationship under the PNR and the possibilities of a new PNR later this year. When Fine Gael's Jim Mitchell suggested an amendment that would delay strike action for up to thirty days in the case of actions where non-Congress unions were involved, the silence from Congress was deafening.

Treacherous Welcome

The treacherous welcome which ICTU affords this Bill is not difficult to explain. They are not opposed to secret ballots, increasingly resorting to them to harness support from the most passive and conservative elements in the working class movement. The main attraction of the IRB is the

extent that it ties future actions to Head Office approval; strengthening the reins of control over the members generally. All things considered, it's going to make life easier for the new breed of hushpuppyed bureaucrats. That's why they cannot get the noose round our necks quick enough.

We need to see this Bill as part of the class collaborationist PNR swindle with the Fianna Fail government. It committed both sides to enter discussions "about changes in industrial relations which would provide a better framework for collective bargaining and help to create conditions for employment-generating investment". The IRB is a child of this marriage of convenience. It has to be seen as preparation by the Irish bourgeoisie for continued attacks on workers' living standards necessary in the razor sharp international competition that 1992 will bring. The Irish boss class are ruthlessly determined to survive at the expense of Irish workers and their families.



Congress must be forced to demand withdrawal of the Bill from the Dáil. Resolutions in every workplace and branch must be passed against it. The demand on Congress to mobilise against the Bill must be taken up in every existing struggle—as in Waterford, the Irish Press, Penn Chemicals, the campaign against the PNR. ICTU must be forced

from their snivelling retreat and onto the offensive. But we must have no illusions in how far these traitors will go. What is needed is an independent rank and file movement to mobilise against the bosses' attacks in particular, to defeat the Bill and kick out the bureaucrats undermine the ability of the movement to defend itself. ■

CPSU CONFERENCE O'Dowd Posturing

DELEGATES at the annual conference of Ireland's largest civil service union—the CPSU—heard their leader argue that the union would oppose talks on a new Programme for National Recovery (PNR) unless "sufficient progress" was made. This Johnny-come-lately criticism of the PNR was hypocritical posturing, considering that O'Dowd, CPSU General Secretary, is one of the most ardent backers of that programme.

Early this year, and without consulting the membership, the union decided at executive level how its puppet delegates would vote at the special ICTU conference. O'Dowd was to the fore in campaigning for a yes vote. It is rumoured that as recently as a week before the mid May conference, the Executive decided to back talks on a second PNR.

However, when it came to dealing with anti-PNR motions on the day, the Chair at first used a procedural device to avoid taking them. If it hadn't been for the insistence of some delegates on suspending standing orders, the debate would never have taken place.

Cornered

Once cornered in this manner, O'Dowd could not avoid mouthing a few brave words. He has consistently put the issues of low pay and grade restructuring to the forefront of his slick media campaigns. In many respects he has been

responsible for increasing expectations among public sectors workers.

How could anybody seriously argue for an improvement in pay or promotion prospects (both sore points in the public sector) while workers are restricted from exercising the right to strike? Yet this is precisely what is entailed in the present PNR which O'Dowd has fully backed. In the end what really put the skids under him was the obvious welter of anti-PNR feeling that has grown significantly among the membership. His newly acquired reservations about the PNR are nothing but a cynical exercise in playing along with these sentiments.

O'Dowd warned that lack of progress could lead to ballots for industrial action the autumn. Is that a promise or a threat, we may well ask? Clearly he is worried that the membership will reject such an agreement and is signalling to Haughey & Co. the need for further concessions. All this follows desperate pre-conference manoeuvres by the executive to get the anti-PNR motions resubmitted. Watch what they do, not what they say.

A motion from *An Post*—sponsored at Branch level by a member of the IWG—ruled out support for any national wage agreement which would restrict the right to strike. This was overwhelmingly endorsed by delegates as was the case with another motion which rejected any future programme that would include phased pay increases.

Another IWG sponsored motion, supporting student provision of abortion information and condemning SPUC, was also easily passed. But it was the issue of privatization that would prove most controversial.

Privatisation

An emergency motion from the *An Post* Branch Committee condemning privatization, was amended by an IWG member at Committee level before it went to conference. This was done in order to add a vital clause prohibiting privatization via the backdoor. It called specifically for opposition to partial sales, de-regulation and partnerships with private capital, a tried and tested way for the bureaucrats to go along with privatisation in practice.

Predicably, the amendment was opposed by a Workers Party member who, fully in step with his party's lurch to the right, couldn't stomach the opposition to partnerships with private capital. Despite this it was passed at branch level. At conference the debate on the *An Post* motion fairly polarized discussion and clearly identified those who really wanted sharp resistance as opposed to those who merely wanted to mouth platitudes.

Even before it got to the conference floor the Chair, having failed to get the *An Post* delegates to refer back the motion, tried to have it remitted by the conference. And when it was pointed out this was in breach of union

rules, he had to be forced to take a show of hands. During the debate it was pointed out the recent ICTU policy document on privatisation which concedes the case for it in "certain" circumstances (put together without consultation with the members) represented a complete U-turn of previous policy.

Some delegates argued that partnerships with private capital already exist in the public sector and that they work very successfully. But this is pure self-delusion. For, as the experience of British Telecom so clearly shows, the highly profitable joint ventures meant shedding jobs, worsening conditions and lowering wages.

That the motion was eventually defeated by 116 to 83 votes was due primarily to an impassioned plea from O'Dowd. He argued that the motion should be opposed because it criticized the ICTU, and that as he was directly involved in drafting the relevant document, the motion was indirectly an attack on him. How right he was! He claimed that the ICTU document had been "misinterpreted". By demagogically putting his own credibility on line, he was able to sway enough delegates from enterprises where the danger of privatization is not so obvious yet.

Despite this, Conference did adopt a resolution opposing any further attempts by the government to privatise semi-state bodies. Now that a start has been made, it is all the more vital to build a fight around the key issues raised there. The pressure must be kept up. To do that, it will be necessary to build joint committees to co-ordinate the work among activists in the different branches of the union as the first step to building a rank and file opposition to tackle both the Haughey government and the ICTU union bosses. ■

AN EVENT that could prove of earth shattering significance took place in the Siberian mining town of Novokuznetsk from 30 April to 2 May. Delegates from 70 independent workers' committees gathered in the town which symbolises the struggle of Siberian miners against the Soviet bureaucracy. They celebrated International Workers Day by forming the Confederation of Labour of the USSR.

According to the mandate commission 64% of the delegates were blue-collar workers and 24.4% were clerical workers. The majority of the delegates were not party members. However the central authorities took the conference so seriously that the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Russian Republic, the central Committee of the official State Union, the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Young Communist League all sent accredited observers. All major Soviet papers reported the Congress. *Arguments And Facts*—the paper with the largest circulation in the world—reported the calling of the Congress as its front-page lead story.

While delegations were pri-

marily from Russian workers' organisations, delegations were also present from the Union of Workers of Lithuania, from Ukraine and from Latvia. "Shield", the independent soldier's union sent delegates. Guests included representatives of Polish Solidarity and Militant tendency supporter, Terry Fields MP.

In an encouraging display of real proletarian internationalism the delegates marked May Day itself with a resolution in support of Lithuania. Only three delegates voted against. The resolution declared that:

Based on the principle of workers' solidarity and social justice the Congress demands the immediate end to the economic and political blockades.

It called for discussion between the Soviet and Lithuanian governments without conditions and in a form that strengthens the quality of relations between the Republics. In a call to Soviet workers it argued that:

Only our solidarity with the people of Lithuania can create freedom both for Lithuania and for other people of our countries.

It called on workers to bust Gorbachev's blockade through:

Soviet Workers Mobilise

Work collectives who have economic links with Lithuania, to continue and deepen those links on the basis of direct trade relations.

For a Market Economy?

However, at the heart of the Congress was lodged a major contradiction. Speaker after speaker saw the task of the Confederation as being the defense of workers' interests and the independence of their organisations. On the evening of 1 May the founding declaration announced the Confed-

eration's aims to be:

Actively defending the rights, freedom and interests of the toilers, the transformation of society on the road to democracy, humanism and social justice.

In a resolution passed in relation to the government, Congress called for "the subordination of the interests of party state bureaucracy to dialogue with the working class."

But this sharp defence of workers' interests and an independent working class force is bound to be in evident tension with the dominant

economic programme voiced at the Congress by keynote speakers. Most accepted the desirability and inevitability of a transition to a market economy. However, the enterprises within this market economy were to be managed by the workers' committees themselves.

In his introductory speech the President of the Kemerovsk Oblast Committee of the Kuzbass Workers' Committee—Vyacheslav Golikov—argued that Gorbachev's "revolution from above" had only thrown Soviet society into deeper crisis. It was meeting

massive resistance from the conservative apparatus. Hence the need for initiatives from "below". But what was to be the goal of this initiative from below? It was to achieve the market relations that the authorities cannot guarantee.

The Soviet workers hate the stifling planned economy that starves them both of initiative and of basic foodstuffs. It should not surprise us that the Congress failed to resolve the contradictions between accepting the inevitability of a market economy and its determination to defend workers' interests. It rightly recognises that:

If our country proceeds along the road to a market economy the need to fight for the conditions and the rights of the workers will be sharply posed.

It correctly argues that if the workers were not independently organised and prepared to struggle:

The entire burden of the inevitable reforms in the economy will fall on the workers' shoulders.

However, the Congress still voted for a compromise between the introduction of the market and the defence of workers' interests. As the protocol declared:

IN DEFENCE OF planned economy

THE DRAMATIC collapse and overthrow of Stalinism has its roots in the bankruptcy of the 'barracks' economy masquerading as socialism in the Eastern bloc and especially in the Soviet Union. Predictably the apologists of capitalism gloat over this opportunity to rubbush the very idea of a planned economy in order to discredit the socialist goal of basing human society upon the principle of human co-operation.

Stalinism has made 'Socialist' planning synonymous with shortages, queues, the black market and poor quality goods. It also has made it a byword for stagnation, bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption. The cynical bourgeois media peddle the lie that chaos, waste and inefficiency are the natural and inevitable result of any socialist project to abolish the capitalist market as the decisive regulator of economic life.

Millions of workers in the East understandably share these views as a result of their experience. All the more so as many of those bureaucrats who once grew fat on bureaucratic planning have now, to save their skins, become the most strident advocates of the market. Similarly in the west, workers have witnessed the revolting spectacle of Communist parties who for years boasted of the successes of socialist East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania now lyrically

extolling the 'virtues' of the market—deceitfully suggesting that the market can be made to serve the workers rather than the capitalists by arguing for a so-called 'social' market.

Planning And Socialism

The whole history of working class struggle against the exploitation, wars, ravages and waste of capitalism has established the key socialist principle that in the epoch of capitalism humanity as a whole can only make genuine and lasting progress by establishing a society where common ownership, democratic administration and social equality are the rule.

Drawing upon the ideas and practices of the 'utopian socialists' of the early 19th century, Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* took it as fundamental that the future socialist or communist economy should be planned comprehensively and democratically. But unlike the utopians, Marx and Engels saw state ownership—nationalization—as a historical stage necessary for the establishment of socialism and then, with the withering away of the state itself, communism. They argued that the key to socialist planning lay in the working class establishing its own political rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat over

bourgeois society so that it might centralize all instruments of production in its hands as a condition for their development.

Writing in the 19th century Marx and Engels viewed the more technically advanced countries Germany, England, France and the USA as the most likely candidates for social revolutions. The developing integration of a world capitalist economic order, with its international division of labour, made it impossible that a workers' state in a backward country, and ultimately even in an advanced capitalist country, could survive in isolation from the higher levels of productivity of a world economy. The economic foundations of a classless and stateless society could not be consolidated in one country (or even a group of countries) as long as the broader world economy remained under the rule of the bourgeoisie. The transition period to socialism after the seizure of power by the working class in any particular country must also be a period of internationalization of the workers' revolution if it is not to be defeated or forced into monstrous degeneration.

The first socialist revolution occurred in backward, feudal, overwhelmingly peasant Russian empire, with a tiny but politically developed, proletariat. Its first tasks included to progressively nationalize the key productive forces, the capitalist monopolies and to control trade with external

capitalism. These were necessary steps to begin subordinating the essential dynamic of capitalism (the capitalist 'law of value') to the principle of conscious planning of production for human need rather than profit.

The Market Versus Workers Democracy

The key feature of capitalism is that machinery, materials, labour, consumer goods etc. are produced and exchanged as commodities solely in terms of their exchange value, and solely with a view to maximising profit. The capitalist law of value is the action of the market in perpetually forcing the price of every commodity down (or up) to the level of its real cost of production—its 'value', which ultimately depends on the level of exploitation of wage-workers. This constant movement also continuously forces investment to move to wherever it will make the highest rate of profit. Capitalists whose investment policies defy this pressure of the market will soon be eliminated by competition. The whole system thus becomes the "war of all against each" for the sake of greater and greater accumulation of capital in the hands of the most powerful monopolies, the most innovative small capitalists or the most brutal exploiters.

Under capitalism the allocation of society's resources for

new economic development is thus driven by the profit motive irrespective of any consideration of how socially undesirable may be the areas selected by the market for further development. Thus, for example, arms, cars and consumer electronics attract huge investment, rapid turnover of new designs or even rapid lowering of prices while hunger dominates huge areas of the globe, public transport is neglected and vital medicines cost a fortune. By expropriating the capitalists, controlling trade with the capitalist world and beginning to plan the allocation of investment to the different sectors, the workers' state begins to abolish the dominance of the market in the most crucial sphere.

But even in the hands of a workers' state based on a highly developed and advanced industrial economy such initial measures would not in themselves continue to drive forward the economy in a socialist direction that could keep pace with, let alone overtake, the capitalist dynamic for 'development'—the profit motive. The socialist mode of production can only be developed when it is driven forward by its own unique dynamic force—the democratic control and initiative of the masses of ordinary working people at every level of society, working out and agreeing the targets and priorities in every sphere, assessing and adjusting performance, initiating new methods etc. con-

stantly and at every level. The reactionary nature of the Stalinist model has been twofold. Not only has it used vast armies of forces labour to catch up on capitalism in isolation from its more productive international division of labour, but crucially, it has systematically crushed the only possible dynamic which could develop the economy in a balanced way—the democratic control of planning and production by the producers!

There can be no progressive lessening of inequality, no final triumph of the conscious planning principle over the capi-



▲ Women queue for food in Bucharest

talist law of value, no withering away of the state except in the hands of the proletariat democratically organised to exercise its own power. The emancipation of the working class remains the "task of the workers themselves". Whether the property-forms in a post-capitalist society can begin to be described as socialist depends on whether or not the direction of the whole system is genuinely towards the triumph of conscious planning for the construction of a society based on the principle

We are in favour of the development of regularised market relations as long as they are attainable within a broad social programme for the defence and improvement of workers' living conditions.

Political Tendencies

In reality, proposals for marketisation and for the defence of workers' interests sit in stark contrast with each other; marketisation will mean job losses, inflation and the deterioration of working conditions. It might fight the bureaucratic old guard, but it won't meet the need of Soviet workers. Workers' management of the enterprises and mines will not attract foreign capital investment. International capitalism is not interested in investing in enterprises where there is an effective workers' veto on management decisions.

That is why the new Confederation must set full course to take the planned economy of the USSR into the hands of the workers themselves; this must be done in a planned and democratically centralised manner. Many voices against such perspectives were raised at the Congress. The new Social Democratic Association (SDA) were repre-

sented by Romyantsev who is an open marketeer. The voice of the new "People's Democratic Party of Russia" was also heard in favour of Russian separatism. Perhaps more ominously an organisation called MTS "Natsionalno Trudovoy Soyuz" which is tainted by collaboration with the Nazi occupiers, had a vociferous minority at the Congress.

Militant (Britain) on 18 May reported Terry Fields' reception at the Congress. They claimed that "Every phrase was greeted with warm applause". This is not true. His attempt to state the woes and miseries of British workers under capitalism did not receive a warm or sympathetic response from this audience of Soviet workers. In fact at many points in his speech the audience gave Terry Fields a rough ride.

After years of repression in a "socialist state" millions of Soviet workers are looking for a way out of their present cycle of repression and misery. Many had illusions in a market economy, which they believe they can run themselves because there are no native capitalists able to buy up their enterprises. In the name of "democracy" and "self-management" many now embrace

systems whose logic is mass unemployment, cuts in real wages and already inadequate social services. They do so in the belief that strong independent workers' organisations can stave off the worst effects of the market and regulate it in the interests of social justice and improved conditions for workers.

Current events in Poland show all too clearly that marketisation and the defence of workers' interests stand in

ever sharper contradiction with one another. And the Polish workers have been doubly disarmed by the Solidarnosc leadership who stand for marketisation and anti-working class austerity.

Marketeers within the Kremlin bureaucracy have openly lamented the absence of a Solidarnosc in the USSR, which would help them sell their austerity packages.

Whatever the mass proletarian base may say, some of

the speakers at the Congress would logically have the Confederation playing the same role as Solidarnosc, acting as marketeers within the bureaucracy against the conservative apparatus. That task is ultimately accepting major attacks on the working class and must be rejected. The alternative is for the Confederation to commit itself to the struggle to take political and economic power into the hands

▼ Ukrainian Miners Protest



of workers' councils. Such a solution could not be based on the market but only on democratically organised planning of production and distribution.

Long Hot Month

June is set to be a long hot month in the USSR. The government has issued the challenge with sweeping price rises. On 11 June miners' representatives from every coalfield in the USSR will meet to discuss a proposal to form an independent miners' union. They will now also be discussing the proposal for strike action against the price increases. On June 20 the Confederation meets again in Donetsk. They will meet at a time of mounting working class hostility against the government. We must do everything in our power to prevent the Confederation of Labour following the path of Solidarnosc. Right now that means active solidarity with the independent Soviet Workers' organisations to prove that their only allies are the international working class. And it means consciously intervening to win the argument against the Social Democrats and nationalists who would so mislead a reborn Soviet workers' movement. ■

of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need".

Without direct control by the proletariat there is no longer any guarantee against the emergence of a distinct caste of bureaucrats who will concentrate the monopoly of force in their own hands and defend their own privileges against the working class. In the Soviet Union the revolution, under the hammer blows of imperialist invasion, economic blockade, civil war and famine, became more and more isolated as the hopes for revolutions in Germany and

vik leaders who had fought for genuine communist internationalism under Lenin and Trotsky.

By 1928 Stalin embarked upon the monstrous obscenity of bureaucratically planned industrialization as the only means of persevering his caste rule from both the working class within and the threat of imperialist invasion from outside.

Bureaucratic Planning

Any rational system of planning for human need has to be

which are necessary for final centralised decisions by elected and controllable administrators.

The 'command-planning' economies of the Eastern bloc did not work because the unelected, uncontrollable and privileged bureaucracy carried out all these functions. It administered the plan without reference to workers' needs. It treated them as merely the objects of planning (and as so much labour available) rather than as the key agents of planning. It ignored the fact that workers need at every level cannot be defined in terms of simple quantities of goods but by the overall quality of life.

In other words, the 'plan' flowed from the bureaucrats' own needs to preserve and extend their privileges, hide them from the working class and secure advancement through the apparatus of power. Secrecy and deception are crucial to this 'command planning'. Complete openness and accountability are the key to democratic centralised planning.

Managers advanced up the hierarchy if their norms set by the central planners were filled. Such norms were mostly measured by weight and volume, since they were the easiest for a bureaucrat to monitor and achieve. The bureaucrats resisted the introduction of any quality control techniques that threatened to undermine their chances of fulfilling the norms under the plan. Many of the idiocies of Stalinist planning flowed from this. For example, the bureaucrats resisted the introduction of new high quality plastic piping, despite its benefit to society, because it weighed less than metal and thus threatened norm fulfillment!

Similarly with the range of products available. The bureaucrats sought to standardize goods in a minimum of

varieties, especially in consumer goods, because it reduced the complications of production and evaluation and helped them to meet their production quotas.

So too with scientific development, where the Soviet Union led the world in the number of new research patents annually. Sophisticated technology and innovation of such new methods in mass production is only possible under conditions of flexibility, co-operation and initiative among workers. But because the bureaucrats feared the loss of control to the workforce, they preferred to sell the patents to capitalism.

Such a system could only survive through lies, theft and corruption among the bureaucrats they sought to retain maximum room to manoeuvre. Plant managers lied to their superiors in the ministries about the resources they had so as to keep planning targets low and to keep as many resources hidden so as to meet demands on them. Ministries competed with one another, just as enterprises did—not in the market place, but in bureaucratic manoeuvres. The parasitic bureaucracy only distorted and sabotaged planning. Its very existence depended upon its ability to ensure that the plan did not meet the needs of working class consumers.

The strategy of 'socialism in one country' rejected by the whole history of Marxism but adopted as the watchword of Stalinism meant replicating basic industries and infrastructure from scratch, as Trotsky put it, "at three times the cost". This strategy of "re-inventing the wheel" focused the whole emphasis of planning away from consumer goods to the heavy industry sector. And when the Stalinist model was imposed in all the other "communist" countries—with the complete suppression there also of work-

ers' democracy—different national Stalinist bureaucracies duplicated yet again many such basic industries for their own national system of privileges, rather than create the beginnings of an international division of labour within the Stalinist bloc itself.

The overall effects of the Stalinist model of 'command planning' have been graphically underlined not only in the USSR—a large economy—but even more grotesquely in Ceausescu's Romania, Bulgaria and Pol Pot's Kampuchea. The strategy of retreat behind the economic borders of one nation has led to unprecedented disasters.

Whereas in a healthy workers state the plan would systematically shorten the working week, increase productivity, reduce prices, raise the quality of production and consumption and the quality of life and leisure, the Stalinists had no need or desire to do this. They forced the workers to work harder on the same machines. If they sought to increase the volume of production, they built new factories with the same type of machinery rather than invest in new technology.

The Socialist Future

A genuine planning system can only be based on what Trotsky termed "a democracy of producers and consumers" i.e. a genuine workers' democracy. Democratic planning would be designed to ensure that the different sectors of any economy—industrial, agricultural, services—would grow in harmony with one another. Working people themselves would ensure a balance was maintained between growth in absolute output and the quality of both goods and the environment. Increased leisure time, prolonged and repeated spells of education, would be weighted

against the length of the working day in order to guarantee a balance between economic growth and cultural development.

And all the time a healthy workers state would have its sights set upon the goal of international socialism. It would reject he perverted Stalinist experiment of building 'socialism in one country'. It would put resources—political and material—into support for revolutionary movements across the globe. It would conclude international planning agreements with other healthy workers states.

The planned economy can and will work. In the USSR and the Eastern bloc the task is not to restore the market—and thus capitalism and a new bourgeoisie—but to re-establish and develop the system of democratic workers' councils which was permanently suppressed by Stalin. So, too all the other post capitalist societies in the rest of the "communist" bloc where capitalism was abolished from above with the aid of Stalinism while crushing the working class from the very start. The restoration of capitalism and the market, the discrediting of planning in the eyes of the world's working class would mean a tragic step backward for the world proletarian struggle, an enormous gain for capitalist imperialism.

The revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy in the Eastern bloc, despite all its contradictions, has nevertheless opened the road for the rescue and democratisation of the planned mechanism and of unblocking the transition to socialism, East and West—on condition that we fight now to win the new anti-stalinist working class forces to the banner of authentic communism in a new Leninist Trotskyist International. ■



Europe failed. Stalin was but the expression of the already developing bureaucratic caste determined to preserve its own privileged power against the interests of both the workers' movement and even against any internal threat of resurgent capitalism among the richer peasantry. Politically his faction carried out a counter-revolution against workers' democracy at home and at the expense of workers' revolution abroad, murdering and purging the whole revolutionary generation of Bolshe-

not only democratically controlled but also integrated, i.e. centralised. This is necessary to evaluate the available resources of society how much energy and raw materials are available, how much labour there is to be deployed etc. Secondly the plan has to identify the overall needs of society and propose what to produce and how much. Without such centralised co-ordinated targets and perspectives it is impossible for workers at all levels to evaluate proposals and propose modifications

SOTSPROF Leaders Interviewed

THE LAST issue of CS criticised the manner in which a "SOTSPROF Solidarity Group" was set up in Ireland as the exclusive property of the Socialist Workers Movement, resulting in a tiny attendance at its picket of the European Heads of State meeting due to the refusal to involve broader forces.

We argued that the "Socialist Trade Union" SOTSPROF was but one new movement in the Eastern Bloc which might be included in genuinely open democratic solidarity work. The SWM's sectarian approach, however, has also now fallen foul of their own opportunism in passing off SOTSPROF as something far healthier than it actually is, as we describe below!

SOTSPROF was among the many tendencies vying for support in the newly emerging Confederation of Labour at Novokuznetsk. In the west it has been linked to the emerging "Socialist Party" linked to Boris Kagarlitsky. But since February there has been open conflict between leaders of the two formations.

The new Socialist Party, which will hold its founding conference with small forces on 18 June has developed a left-reformist opposition to Stalinism. Kagarlitsky has supported the idea of a popular democratic front to oppose "market Stalinism" in a fight to reform the economy in the direction of workers self-management, but with the dismantling rather than democratisation of centralised planning. His group attracted little support at Novokuznetsk where the major resolutions were heavily influenced by the pro-market Social Democrats. While the workers expressed deep illusions in restoring the market rather than calling for a socialist alternative, they rejected all attempts to link the new movement to any existing political party, preferring to mobilise as a "socio-political" movement, not defined as either a trade union or a party.

SOTSPROF, by contrast, is now more decisively than ever in the business of building trade unions in the style of the bureaucratised movements in the west. In a long and frank interview with IWG its chairman Sergei Kramov on 22 May expressed his antagonism towards the socialist political activists connected with SOTSPROF around Kagarlitsky and Volovic.

Sporting the badge of the American AFL-CIO, Kramov announced SOTSPROF's intention to apply at the next executive meeting for membership of the right-wing International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The structures emerging under Kramov, backed up by rules adopted in February, are far from concerned with rank and file democratic control over officials.

Organisers are paid from funds levied (at anything from 0 to 10%) on commercial enterprises which have been given legal status under the stamp of SOTSPROF. Its ability to give such status to other bodies is a major factor in the growth of its apparatus which comprised 60 local trade union bodies and 100 (!) commercial bodies according to Kramov on 22 May. One of the

affiliated organisations is 'Shield' which represents a section of militia and military officers' and their families. Its identifiable figures are reportedly retired officers, the risks being too great for serving officers to be known to belong to Shield.

How then could SOTSPROF continue to call itself "socialist"? For Kramov this part of the union's name has now no more meaning than "social" or "social democratic" as used internationally by trade unions in the ICFTU! The real political affinity of SOTSPROF, he claimed, was with the Social Democrats and the Constitutional Democrats.

The main business of its trade union bodies is seen as negotiating wage contracts, normally settled each February. This September it will organise a conference for union organisers to develop model contracts for the next round of bargaining. Stating that the government had now removed the obligation of workers to belong to the official trade unions, Kramov claimed that this would mean a flood into SOTSPROF, which he said had won for one of its own unions of medical workers the same sick-pay benefits as formerly administered only by the official unions.

▼ SOTSPROF Rulebook

УСТАВ
ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЯ
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ
ПРОФСОЮЗОВ
СССР
СОЦПРОФ

УТВЕРЖДЕН 1 СЪЕЗДОМ СОЦПРОФ СССР

МОСКВА
1990

Rightly criticising the direction taken by SOTSPROF, a leader of the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists told the IWG that they would be forming the nucleus of their own unions, beginning in Moscow in June, prior to their national conference in August. They claim about 400 members and 2,000 supporters. Unlike SOTSPROF, the anarcho-syndicalists are unambiguous about their willingness to constitute a part of the new Confederation of Labour.

The future of SOTSPROF as either a rival to the new Confederation of Labour or as part of it is unclear. Their ambition is to help create and win into their own structures future unions emerging among the forces which look to the Confederation of Labour, e.g. permanent unions of the miners. Their present claim of "not more than 50,000 members" (according to Volovic) amounts to a tiny force in the context of 143 million members of official trade unions in the USSR. And its political direction does not suggest that the battalions of workers poised for the next round of struggle will look to SOTSPROF for leadership.■

Review: A Marxist Analysis of JAMES CONNOLLY

A SERIES of public meetings in April and May in Dublin, Derry, Cork and Galway saw the launch of a new book on James Connolly. Published by the Irish Workers Group at only £3.90, this compact work of 176 pages presents a powerful new analysis of the unique political synthesis and legacy of James Connolly.

In introducing the work the authors conclude:—

After the rising, Trotsky perceptively observed that the young Irish working class tended to swing between syndicalism and nationalism in search of a programme. Connolly's central ideological struggle consisted of the attempt to render such impulses into a coherent political consciousness. The wonder is that he achieved as much as he did, given the sources and influences that shaped his ideas.

The book assesses these "sources and influences" as the key to the paradoxes of Connolly's political struggle. His apprenticeship to Marxism in the Scottish context narrowed his grasp of scientific socialism to an economic-determinist 'orthodoxy'—then prevalent in Britain notwithstanding Engels' criticisms of it as a wooden dogma. Nevertheless, under the influence of the Irish emigrant milieu of Edinburgh he rebelled against the 'orthodox' Social-Democratic attitude which relegated the Irish question to the margins.

It was a time when the effects of the new Imperialist epoch of capitalism were sowing confusion among European socialists. A new revolutionary wing of the Second International was fighting to re-elaborate the socialist programme for the new epoch—especially Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg. They, too, had to address the new significance of revolutionary-democratic and anti-imperialist national struggles. But, unlike them, Connolly was cut off from the richer intellectual tradition of Marxism and the debates which developed in the continental movement.

In creatively seeking to combine the class and national struggles for Ireland, important flaws in Connolly's method expressed themselves in a very particular view of

the Irish nation and of Irish labour in history. He boldly claimed that the national struggle in Ireland was really the struggle of the toiling masses stretching across the millenium since the Norman conquest abolished the 'communal democracy' which he believed to have existed until the 'foreigners' brought the 'alien system' of private property to Ireland. For him, the 're-conquest of Ireland' was thus to be also the restoration of the old communal values in the form of socialism.

While this schema enabled him to give a central political emphasis to the Irish national struggle, thus overcoming the backward outlook of British Marxism on the question, it embodied major mistakes which were ultimately to disarm him and blind him to the distinct class character of Irish revolutionary nationalism.

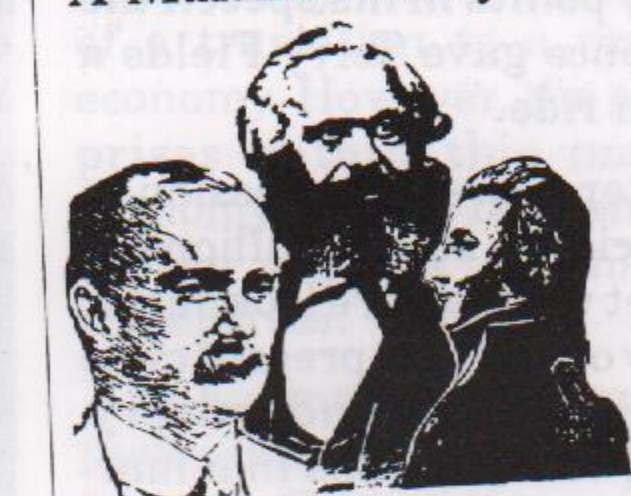
An impressive feature of the book is how it presents Marx's own analyses of Ireland and contrast them with Connolly's. This throws into sharp relief both Connolly's mistakes and the degree to which he was cut off from the mainstream of the living Marxist tradition. A surprise to many readers will be to discover that Marx analysed the social structures in ancient and pre-Norman Ireland, in his *Ethnological Notebooks*, from which extensive material is presented to show how an indigenous Irish feudal system of private property was developing long before the Conquest.

But the conflict between Marx and Connolly's analysis is nowhere sharper than when they analyse the period of Wolfe Tone—for Marx a bourgeois revolutionary whose success would have accelerated the development of capitalist private property and exploitation in Ireland; but for Connolly he was revolutionary patriot of no specific class character whose mission was to champion the social interests of the exploited toilers.

In fact, failing to understand the Irish national struggle as the striving for an independent bourgeois Ireland, beginning in the 18th century, Connolly denies any progressive mission to the Irish bourgeoisie. Its 'reformers' he relegates to the camp of the imperialist thieves. Its 'revolutionaries' he claims as

This new book on James Connolly presents a systematic Marxist analysis of his politics from a standpoint free of the Stalinised 'Marxism' of previous left biographies. It challenges both nationalist and eclectic 'revisionist' views of Connolly.

CONNOLLY A Marxist Analysis



Andy Johnston
James Larragy
Edward McWilliams

176 pages A5. On sale from April 1990 at £3.75 (IR£3.90). Or by post for £4.50 payable to IWG, c/o 12 Langrishe Place, Dublin 1

champions of the toiling masses.

While these issues in Connolly's historiography are central to the book, detailed attention is given also to the related areas of Connolly's thinking on religion and on the family and women's oppression. This champion of women's economic equality rejected the right to divorce and railed against Bebel's classic Marxist work on women's oppression. And, claiming that socialists should 'fight shy' of all discussion of religion, he was politically disarmed in the face of the monumental obstacle of Catholic social power in Ireland and blind to the real origins of the religious differences which divided Irish workers. It argues, however that he was not a Christian Socialist, despite privately retaining a Christian belief.

While Connolly is claimed as a founding figure by every political shade in both the labour and radical republican traditions in Ireland, there is little doubt that his life-long struggle was predominantly against capitalism and in the working class movement.

His evolving conception of how the working class should come to power and put an end to capitalism is presented in terms of his Scottish experience, his American period and his achievements in his sec-

ond Irish period. His was an original blend of syndicalism and socialism which he brought to bear on the Irish situation from 1910 onwards, but one in which, unlike his Russian contemporaries, he failed to discover an effective method of relating the party of the socialists to the mass organisations of the class.

Much discussed on the Irish left is the question of how he then 'flipped over' from being a socialist and trade union leader all his life until, suddenly in 1916 he sacrificed himself under the banner of a revolutionary nationalist insurrection for which he had not attempted to mobilise any independent mass forces of the working class. The development of the book's overall thesis answers this question effectively. Contradicting the claims of Austen Morgan in his recent biography of Connolly, it is argued that even in this final heroic act Connolly remained a socialist in his perspectives, believing the insurrection would open a new period in which the socialist and syndicalist movement of the organised labour would once again march forward to the Workers' Republic. As the authors conclude:—

We see his demise in the 1916 insurrection not as the product of simple abandonment of his socialist career, but rather as its inescapable conclusion. Not some sudden conversion to Pearse's nationalism but his own theoretical paradigm since as early as 1897, provides the key to the rights and wrongs of Connolly's ultimate political sacrifice, and indeed to so much of the political legacy we have inherited from him.

There is much else in this work of exceptional merit, notably the original analysis of Ireland's uneven and combined development and the complex class struggles which crystallised the religious divisions in the working class of Ulster. But above all, the book is distinguished from all previous analyses of Connolly by solidly basing itself in the Marxist method, unfalsified by the Stalinist distortions which have dominated Irish 'left' analyses of Connolly. It offers a powerful challenge to all in the Marxist left and radical republican movements who claim Connolly as justification of their particular programmes.

For that reason, this book can serve as a powerful stimulus to the political debate and polemic which remains necessary if ever the forces are to be rallied in Ireland to take up again the fight for the Workers' Republic. Buy it, read it, debate its ideas.■

Debate With Spartacists

ON 28 APRIL after demonstrating outside the European Heads of State meeting in Dublin, the IWG took part in a public debate in TCD with the Spartacist League on "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany". Speaking for the IWG's international organisation (LRCI) was Richard Brenner who replied to Alastair Green of the International Communist League (Spartacists).

Accusing the LRCI of having taken a "soft-core capitalist restorationist" position in the GDR, Green argued from the standpoint that the overthrow of capitalism in East Germany (and all the other over- turns up to Vietnam and Kampu-

chea) by the Stalinist bureaucracies had been progressive.

The LRCI argued that the overthrow of capitalism in those countries had been forced upon the reluctant Stalinists and based on the fundamental pre-condition that they first crushed the working class. It was a major error to believe that Stalinism could take on a progressive character at certain times.

Green tried to confuse the issue by falsely claiming that the LRCI viewed the outcome of the Vietnam war as reactionary! The victory of that heroic people against the US was enormously progressive as a democratic struggle against imperi-

alism despite the Stalinists' historical record of treachery in the struggle. The later (by several years) elimination of capitalism in South Vietnam, however, was done in the same bureaucratic anti-working class manner as in Eastern Europe.

Defending these states against the restoration of a bourgeoisie, however, could never mean blocking with the Stalinists against the mass movement of the workers on the pretext that the workers had illusions in pro-market leaders. Workers could only learn through their own struggle.

The Spartacists' adaptation to Stalinism led them in Germany to take the side of the Stalinists against the masses who smashed up the

Stasi offices; and to advocate a 'peaceful' development of the 'political revolution' against Stalinism. The same political method had previously led them to support the Kremlin's invasion of Afghanistan and Jaruzelski's smashing of the Polish workers' movement.

They were unable to answer the charge that, at the most basic level of Marxist theory, they misconstrued the 'contradictory' character of Stalinism as a 'dual' character. Parties such as Labour or CPs based on the workers but with a bourgeois programme are 'contradictory' formations, but their actions and strategy are always predominantly reactionary; not 'sometimes' progressive as the theory of a 'dual' nature would have us believe! ■

Scrap All Immigration Controls

AS 1992 and the "Single European Market" approach, capitalist governments throughout Europe vie with one another to prove their pan-European credentials. But for one group in Europe the "internationalism" of the bosses has a hollow ring.

Over ten million immigrant workers, legally resident in the European community (EC), will be denied the freedom of movement given to other workers. Possibly a billion or more "illegal" immigrants will continue to be denied all rights—apart from the right to be a super-exploited part of the labour force, harassed and hunted by the immigration authorities. Billions more black workers with

a concerted international clampdown on immigration across Europe.

The Single European Act, which forms the legal framework for 1992, guarantees the free movement of labour within Europe. In theory this means that the black workers granted citizenship or residents rights in one part of Europe can move unhindered to another part.

As a result the ruling class parties of every European country are working overtime to make sure that "fortress Europe" becomes a fortress against "foreign" workers. They are tightening the immigration laws in countries which have proved the weakest links in the racist chain.

Market, and which are being denied full membership of the EC. While at present citizens of 59 countries require visas for the EC countries the so-called "harmonisation" will increase the number to 115.

Likewise with the relaxation of internal border controls. The domestic system of immigration control in Germany and France—where police and employers constantly harass black people with demands to "see their papers"—will become widespread. Already a series of shadowy groups, involving ministers, civil servants, police and security services, have been set up within the EC, to look at the supposed threat this poses.

"foreigners" were born there! If a real European labour market opens up after 1992 these workers will have no part of it. The 'inner city ghetto' phenomenon will be repeated on a European scale with immigrant workers left to rot in areas of high unemployment. White workers will be able to migrate to new centres of production much more freely.

The European 'socialist' and Social Democratic parties have been ringing their hands about the upsurge of racist violence in Europe while merely adding their voices to the reactionary chorus to stem immigration.

A recent statement by the European Trades Union Confederation accepted that "abolition of control over inter-community frontiers will require measures to tighten up control over external community frontiers".

Against this, revolutionary socialists and internationalists must struggle within the working class to put forward their own alternatives: the abolition of all immigration controls and the free movement of labour within and outside of the EC.

The argument that there is "no room" for any more immigrants must be exposed for what it is—a racist lie. No serious ruling class politician in Britain, where this argument is used, has ever suggested an end of immigration from Ireland and yet tens of thousands of Irish workers go to Britain every year.

Where was the hue and cry about the potential "threat" of tens of thousands of white South Africans arriving who have right of abode in Britain? Compare this with the Hong Kong Chinese who were a "threat to the British way of life"! To go along with the argument that immigration controls need to be tightened, as the labour and trade union leaders are doing, is to play into the hands of the racists.

In capitalist Europe the contrast between the freedom of capital and the unfreedom of labour is striking. The bosses' money roams the stock markets of the world virtually unhindered. Unlike the workers who generate the wealth, capital face no immigration controls, no colour bars. As long as there is an international economy where workers are chained behind national borders, forced to abandon their families and their civil rights in return for the right to work in another country, the bosses will be able to exploit cheap labour and keep the workers divided through racist bigotry.

Workers must demand:

Repeal all immigration laws.

Block all forced repatriations.

An immediate amnesty for all unauthorised workers in Europe.

Scrap all visas and internal immigration checks.

For the right of immigrant workers to organise politically without restrictions.

Every worker to have the right of residence, citizenship, family unity, voting and equal access to social benefits in the country where they work.



▲ French police harass immigrant workers.

EC citizenship will not escape the rising tide of racist attacks on European immigrant communities as they face the prospect of tough new citizenship and immigration laws in the run-up to 1992.

The post-war economic expansion was the impetus for the wave of immigration to western Europe. Unlike in Britain, the migrant workers drawn in by west Germany, Switzerland and France were not given citizenship rights. So by the end of the post-war boom there were millions of migrant workers and their families in western Europe—all second class citizens without nationality or voting rights, subject to super-exploitation to keep labour under constant racist attacks.

This is the background to the rise of racist attacks and electoral support for the far right. The German Republican Party polled over 2 million votes in the June 1989 Euro Elections. In France the fascist National Front experienced a renewed surge of electoral support winning the Dreux by-election with 60% of the vote last year. In May the right wing Regional Ligamondardas scooped up to 20% of the vote in local elections in parts of northern Italy. Everywhere the racist message is the same: repatriate the migrants, give their jobs to whites, terrorise their communities. The result has been

The rise in racist attacks in Italy was fueled by government fury over immigration. The Italian ruling class was refused membership of a cross-border travelling agreement by Germany and France and told to get its act together over illegal immigration from Africa. In response Italy declared a four month amnesty for illegal immigrants combined with a ban on new immigration. The army and navy were deployed around the coast of southern Italy to prevent illegal entry.

Combined with tightening of immigration laws, European governments are "harmonising" entry regulations. Whilst British immigration controls are the strictest in Europe, it only requires entry visas from a few countries. They controls are operated by Ireland without any legal basis or parliamentary legislation, because of the relative freedom of movement between the two countries. By contrast France requires visas for many. So the EC Ministers have set about drawing up a list of "negative" countries whose citizens will need visas to visit any EC country after 1992.

Not surprisingly at the top of the list appear Morocco, Algeria, Rhodesia and Turkey—countries whose economies and labour markets have been drawn inexorably into the vortex of the single European

The Schengen Group is organising a computerised information exchange network to enforce immigration rules. The so-called Trevi Group has been set up to co-ordinate measures against "terrorism, violence and drug-trafficking". In 1986 it suddenly increased its remit to cover the access of non-EC nationals to the community. The nature of its secret discussions were revealed recently when a British Home Office spokesperson described its agenda as covering "terrorism, immigrants, other undesirables and a common refugee policy". The results of the "common refugee policy" are already clear. At the start of the 1980s about 70% of requests for political asylum were granted by EC countries. Now is down to less than 15%.

The unashamed racism of the immigration laws of the single Europe is shown by the blatant inequality on the right to migrate. Five million EC citizens and their families have migrated to other European countries where they have equal access to social benefits, employment and family unity. But millions of immigrant workers who live in the EC completely legally have no such rights.

For most it is made virtually impossible to gain citizenship rights even if they were born in the country. In Germany 15% of so-called

OUR PROGRAMME

The Crisis of Leadership

CAPITALISM, no matter how extreme its crises in this imperialist epoch, will never depart the scene automatically—it needs to be consciously overthrown.

Today the proletariat worldwide does not yet face, as it did on the eve of the last imperialist war, the stark alternative of either taking power or seeing the destruction of all its past gains. But its crisis of political leadership is no less real now than it was in 1938.

None of the existing leaderships of the working class are willing or able to carry through a fight to transform the defensive struggles of the workers and poor peasants across the globe into the struggle for power. They remain tied to the interests of the bourgeoisie or the parasitic bureaucracy of the Stalinist states.

Social Democracy and Stalinism Twins

The growth of European imperialism corrupted the leading sections of the mass workers' international of 1889-1914, culminating in the Second International becoming recruiting sergeants for the imperialist war. Then as a wave of revolutions swept Europe from 1917 on, they openly sided with the bourgeois counter-revolution against the working masses. Social democracy became strategically wedded to the capitalist economy and the capitalist state.

The Third (Communist) International was formed out of the fight against Social Democracy's betrayals. In its first four congresses it began to re-elaborate the revolutionary programme for the imperialist epoch.

But after 1923, with the Stalinist political counter-revolution against Bolshevism, it replaced the goal of world revolution with the reactionary utopia of 'socialism in one country'.

After the crushing of German working class in 1933 Trotsky declared the Stalinist Comintern dead for revolution. The building of a new world party—the Fourth International—was on the agenda. It existed as a healthy centre of revolutionary communist propaganda from 1938-48 after which it collapsed into confused centrist fragments under the impact of Stalin's expansion into Eastern Europe.

Stalinism continued on its path to an out-and-out counter-revolutionary strategy, transforming the communist parties of the democratic imperialist states into reformist parties preaching class collaboration and 'peaceful co-existence'. It commended the masses to the defence of their own imperialism, thus following Social Democracy.

The Stalinist parties are the twin of Social Democracy, sharing with it the ideologies of social patriotism and reformism. But their different origins, structures, and traditions—the support they gave and received from the bureaucracy of the Stalinist states—set them apart, both in the eyes of the working class and the bourgeoisie.

Both remain servants of the bourgeois world order inside the working class—"bourgeois workers' parties". Towards the end of the second world war, when revolutionary struggle developed in Italy, France and the Balkans, the combined forces of Stalinism and Social Democracy acted resolutely as the agents of counter-revolution to hold off the masses' attempt to settle accounts with their own bourgeoisie.

Throughout the 60s and 70s this tragic story has been repeated as periods of intense class struggle have been successfully corralled within the limits of bourgeois legality. In France, Chile, Portugal and Spain, the working class suffered serious defeats at the hands of these traitors.

In South Africa and the semi-colonies Stalinism clings to the perspective of a democratic stage which indefinitely postpones the fight for working class power but embraces all kinds of bourgeois, petit bourgeois, clerical or military bonapartist allies.

This strategy has resulted in bloody and decisive defeats in key revolutionary situations such as Chile where Stalinism and Social Democracy led the workers and poor peasants to disaster under Allende's popular front.

It renounced the arming of workers from the outset despite their creation of proto-soviets and poorly armed militias.

Death Knell of Stalinism

In the Eastern Bloc countries the struggles of the working class at various points throughout the 50s, 60s and 70s against bureaucratic privilege and repression took it to the brink of political revolution in East Germany, Hungary and Poland. But the absence of a political revolutionary strategy resulted in defeat at the sharpest point of every revolutionary crisis.

With ever deepening stagnation of their economies a wave of democratic revolutions is sweeping the Stalinists from power in Eastern Europe and threatening the Kremlin in the heartland of Stalinism.

These events have only served to strengthen anti and non-working class forces, nationalism and clericalism etc.. These stand brazenly for the restoration of capitalism and market forces—for which already in Poland the working class is paying a terrible price. The workers' illusions in parliamentary democracy are a cruel deception fostered by western imperialism to ease the restoration of capitalist exploitation.

The world historic crisis which now sounds the death knell of Stalinism must not become a victory for the "social democratic" creatures of imperialist capitalism.

A new international must urgently be built to take up and develop again the revolutionary traditions of Lenin and Trotsky. The Trotskyist Manifesto, the programme of the LRCI, is a key step in that direction.■

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Class Struggle

Waterford, PNR, Irish Press... Build A Rank & File Movement!

AFTER TWO months of all-out strike one of the most combative industrial workforces in the country has now pressured the bosses of Waterford Glass back to the negotiating table.

The union officials of the ATGWU claim that their 'starting position' will be to reject all wage cuts. But the Waterford Wedgewood consortium is determined, like several other important sections of the bosses, to go all out for major cuts in wages and conditions to hike up productivity. This is the second round of major productivity demands in three years. Last year the workforce turned out more crystal, with 1,000 less workers, than ever in its 41 year existence.

In the same week the Irish Press Group named July 23 for shutting down its three national papers and sacking 700 workers unless they too accept major cuts in wages and conditions to boost productivity and profits. Furthermore, the imminence of the Single European Market is driving Irish capitalists to



Waterford strikers in Dublin to seek support and also to attend pressconference of anti-PNR campaign.

PHOTO DEREK SPEIRS/REPORT

prepare a deeper and more generalised productivity of offensive in order to survive the tougher competition that lies ahead.

These major points of conflict with the bosses raise vital questions of strategy and

tactics for socialists and workers. Coming after the first upward turnaround in strike days for five years, at a moment when there is widespread smouldering antagonism towards the union bureaucracy's pact with

Haughey, the Programme for National Recovery. Socialists must argue for methods of struggle which can link up the different issues, spread the solidarity, and begin to win the most militant elements to a class perspective on the developing economic struggle.

Delayed at first by the foot dragging of the ATGWU bureaucracy, a very good start has now been made in spreading the solidarity action nationally with Waterford, leading to the setting up also of a Dublin-Waterford Solidarity Group which toured Waterford workers around Dublin factories through the co-operation of union activists and socialists including the IWG. The developing of such centres of solidarity across the working class is not only necessary to the struggle in Waterford but a vital possible gain for the working class movement in general.

Irish industrial workers are peculiarly sectionalised by the scattered manner in which they are concentrated by a wide range of foreign industrial corporations. Add to this the extremely bureaucratic and remote structures

of the official unions for most workers, and the need for militant organisations of the rank and file becomes crystal clear.

But such beginnings of a rank and file movement cannot be developed unless militants fight to win them to a wider platform of action which can link up the key fronts of struggle. Thus the same activists make up the new campaign against the PNR (TUUAP) as organise the Dublin Waterford Solidarity group; yet no fight has been taken up to get the Waterford Workers, with all their prestige in struggle, to call on workers generally to support the campaign against the PNR. Making such connections is vital!

The same logic applies to the burning issues of threatened privatisation (on which the ICTU has done a U-turn in open contempt of the rank and file), of union democracy (completely erased for years to come in the new SIPTU), and the continued attacks on the unemployed, the health, educational and social services etc. On all these questions, as on attacks on women's rights, as on state repression north and south,

socialists must struggle to link up the mobilisations of the rank and file in partial ways on different fronts. That means arguing openly around the present campaigns for the perspective of a national rank and file movement in the trade unions, committed to struggle against the ruling class offensive and to transform the unions into democratic fighting organisations under rank and file control.

Socialists have another duty in relation to conflicts such as at Waterford and the Irish Press. In both cases the real threat of a complete shutdown might force many trade unionists, faced with foot-dragging or outright betrayal by their official leaders, to accept significant cuts to save as many jobs as possible. The fight for the most militant tactics and the most widespread solidarity is the best immediate response.

But the most militant tactics can also lead not to surrender by the bosses but to closure and the movement of their capital elsewhere. Socialists must fight to persuade the most class-conscious militants that there is a working class alternative to such a threat. In the best traditions of class struggle by organised workers, they must fight for mass occupations of plant, holding all assets to ransom to prevent closure, to force open the books publicly to working class inspection, and if the bosses will not maintain workers' wages and conditions, to raise the demand and build class-wide solidarity for the nationalisation without compensation of the whole enterprise, putting it under the day-to-day inspection and veto of workers' control.

The open fight for such a perspective, while taking up and developing all the immediate solidarity tasks, is the only way in which socialists can link immediate struggles to the transitional goal of class wide action against capitalism itself.

And if socialists do not fight to make that link they have nothing better to offer the working class than a slightly more vigorous trade unionism which can never ultimately protect the gains it makes whatever the cost in struggle.■

Abortion Struggle in Cork

THE SOCIALIST Society in University College Cork has spearheaded action in the campus and the city since last October to assert the right to abortion information.

Though a student union general meeting mandated its leaders to distribute the information these cowards held back until after a referendum convened by the right and in which the pro-SPUC lobby carried a 60% majority after plastering walls with pictures of aborted fetuses. Local shops were told by college committees not to photocopy material for the Socialist Society in relation to

the abortion information campaign!

The Socialist Society created the Cork Abortion Information Campaign which drew in other forces in the city into a number of actions. Meanwhile in the College they successfully fought against the imposition of a fine on them for publishing the abortion information telephone number. Students from the SWM, who keep aloof from the college Socialist Society, recently won recognition for their own society but college committees are moving to cancel this because they distributed abortion information. When the

SU banned a Socialist Society meeting from union premises they defied the ban and are now on the offensive against the Union leaders for trying to deny them the use of student facilities.

These events underline the urgency of preparing the fight to mobilise student activists across the country in the new academic year. The new Federation of College Socialist Societies is one forum which should now be developed as a means to this end.■

[INFORMATION BASED, WITH THANKS, ON A LETTER FROM A CORK CORRESPONDENT]